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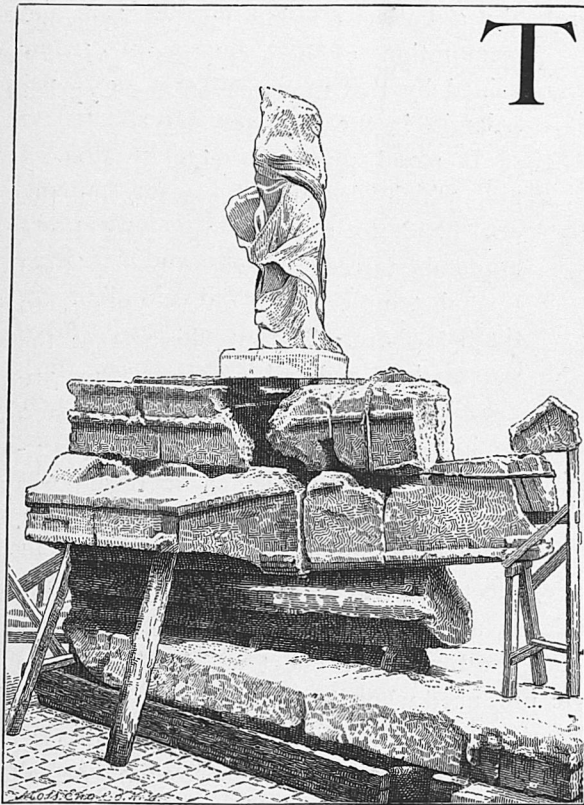
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THE VICTORY OF SAMOTHRAKE.



THE VICTORY AND ITS PEDESTAL, AS RESTORED FROM THE FRAGMENTS.

THE Victory of Samothrake, which was alluded to, and compared with the Nike of Paionios, in a late article on Olympia (see page 246 of the REVIEW), had been but lately placed in the Hall of the Caryatides at the Louvre when I first saw it, and, as I had not heard it spoken of, it impressed me with all the freshness of a personal discovery. It was found in the year 1863 by M. Charles Champoiseau, French Consul at Adrianople, while making excavations at Samothrake, for which he had obtained a government grant of twenty-five hundred francs.¹ After gathering a rich harvest of bas-reliefs, inscriptions, bucranes, and rosettes, and uncovering the threshold of a great Doric temple, he was digging along the façade of a portico or stoa, when his attention was attracted by a piece of white marble protruding from the ground, which, on examination, proved to be the upper portion of a female figure of admirable workmanship. Convinced that he was on the eve of an important discovery, M. Champoiseau called the workmen to his aid, who speedily disinterred the Victory, which lay buried under two feet of earth and stones. Search was then made

for the head and arms, but without success, although many fragments of other parts of the statue were discovered² within the three-sided enclosure or cella in which it originally stood, together with enormous blocks of gray marble, belonging to its stylobate and pedestal. Their removal was most desirable, but, as the Consul had nearly exhausted his funds, and could not detain the vessel long enough to embark them, he contented himself with taking formal possession of them in the name of the French government, and, trusting to return at no distant period, departed, carrying the statue with him. It was not, however, until August, 1878, fifteen years after his first visit, that he once more set foot on the island. As the road which he had opened from the ruins to the beach had in the mean time completely disappeared, it had to be reconstructed. This work, and the necessary preparation of tree-trunk sledges suitable for the transportation of heavy material, occupied several days; and yet within eleven days from the beginning of operations the twenty-six immense blocks belonging to the pedestal and its base were brought to the shore and safely placed on board the vessel, which at once set sail for a neighboring Turkish port, whence they were reshipped for Marseilles on board a French steamer.

During the interval between his first and second visits to the island, M. Champoiseau had come to the conclusion that the pedestal of the statue was shaped like the prow of an antique

¹ See the *Revue Archéologique* of January 1st, 1880.

² M. Fröhner, at page 434 of his *Notice de la Sculpture Antique*, says the torso was reconstructed at the Louvre out of one hundred and eighteen pieces. M. Champoiseau's account leaves the impression that the torso was found unbroken.

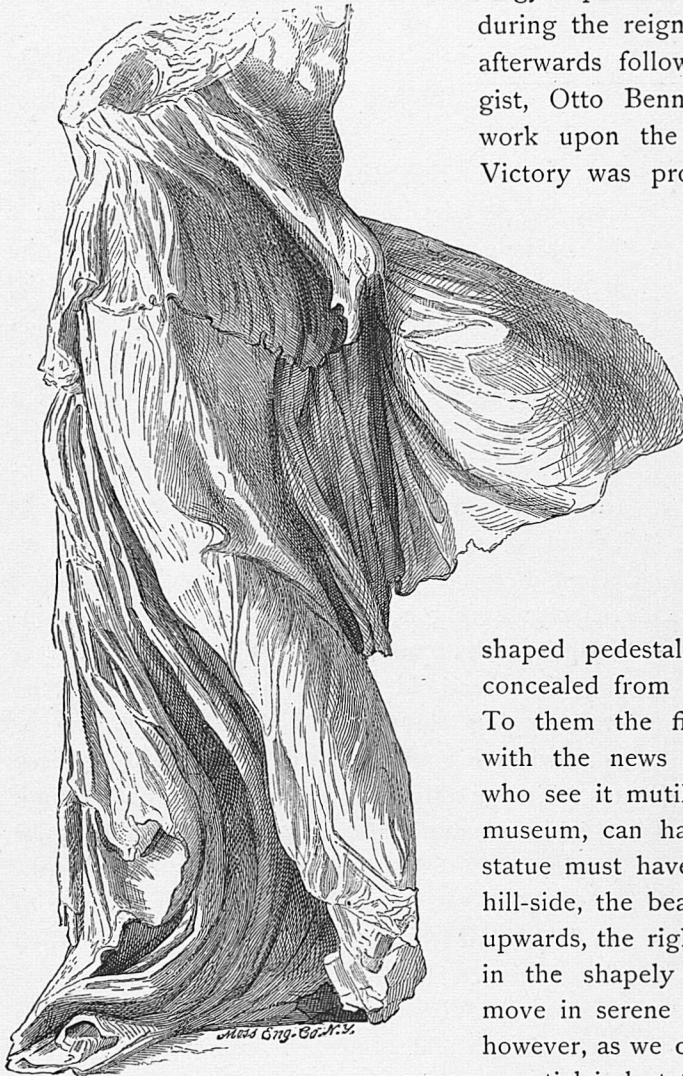
galley. On examining the blocks of the base which supported it, he found that the place upon which the keel once rested was clearly defined, and recognized in the Victory the original of the

effigy represented on the reverse of certain coins struck during the reign of Demetrios Poliorketes. This clew was afterwards followed up by the eminent German archæologist, Otto Benndorf, who, in the second volume of his work upon the antiquities of Samothrake, states that the Victory was probably a votive offering erected in com-

memoration of a great naval victory gained by that monarch off the Cyprian Salamis, in the year 306 B. C.¹

It stood upon the side of a steep hill, which descended rapidly, on the one hand, to a valley traversed by a mountain torrent, on whose banks stood several temples, and, on the other, to the sea-shore. The worshippers at the sanctuaries, and all persons who approached the island from the water, could see the statue and its galley-

shaped pedestal, but the base upon which it rested was concealed from their view by the formation of the ground. To them the figure seemed about to soar aloft, charged with the news of fleets destroyed and battles won. We who see it mutilated, and imprisoned within the walls of a museum, can hardly estimate the effect which the perfect statue must have produced when it stood against the green hill-side, the beautiful head thrown back, the gaze directed upwards, the right arm raised, and the palm-branch grasped in the shapely hand, winged or wingless, alike able to move in serene majesty through the fields of air. Seeing, however, as we do, how much that we should have thought essential is lost to us, we wonder all the more at the genius which could so infuse the whole marble with life that what remains to us is still instinct with it. We remember what



THE VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE.

FROM A DRAWING BY CHARLES C. PERKINS.

Hawthorne said about the Elgin marbles, that nothing short of annihilation could extinguish the vital spark in them, and feel that this is also true of the Victory of Samothrake. The question whether she ever had wings is, after all, an idle one, since without them she seems freed from the law of gravitation. This is due to the pose of the figure, which gives the body somewhat the outline of a half-bent bow, suggestive of flight, and to the masterly disposition of the drapery, which is driven back by the wind in curving folds against the limbs, emphasizing their outline and harmonizing with their action. Massed together upon the right, these folds not only produce an admirable effect, but form an all-sufficient support to the figure, and thus serve the double end of beauty and utility. This is an instance of that *ars celare artem* which none but the greatest artists understand. Which one among them here exemplified it, will probably never be known, but we should conjecture that he was a sculptor bred in the traditions of the grand and dramatic school of Skopas, rather than in the realistic and somewhat artificial atmosphere of the school of Lysippos, which had superseded it at the close of the fourth century before Christ.

CHARLES C. PERKINS.

¹ Beiblatt zur Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst, April 1st, 1880, col. 404.

J. M. G. G. G.

